

G.I. Joe Yearbook 3

Sunday, 23 November 2008

G.I. JOE Yearbook #3

Cover Date: March, 1987

Hush Job

Writer: Larry Hama

Pencils: Ron Wagner

Inks: Kim DeMulder
 Summary: In this completely silent story, a Cobra transport helicopter arrives at the new Cobra Consulate highrise in Manhattan. The Baroness and Dr. Mindbender exit the helicopter, and Cobra troopers follow carrying the unconscious body of Snake-Eyes. They enter the doors leading downstairs and they close behind them. High above the city, a Conquest fighter watches with its spy camera. Slip-Stream is the pilot and Scarlett is manning the surveillance equipment.

At the wreckage of Snake-Eyes' cabin in the High Sierra mountains, Storm Shadow tends a campfire beside the wolf, Timber. Scarlett parachutes from above and shows Storm Shadow the photo of Snake-Eyes, captured.

At the highest level of Cobra Consulate, huge windows look out over the city. In a sunken area below, Dr. Mindbender probes Snake-Eyes mind with the Brain-wave scanner as the Baroness watches from above. Satisfied, she leaves Mindbender to his work.

On a New York subway, a man in a trenchcoat and hat boards, while three street punks prepare to rob him. The man pulls out a sword and cuts off part of the punks' hair. He then leaps from the train's open door into the subway tunnel. It's Storm Shadow, and he's arrived at the lowest level of the Consulate. Meanwhile, Scarlett sneaks into the Consulate as one of many cleaning ladies with vacuum cleaners. In the sewers below, Storm Shadow encounters two Cobra Eels on patrol, taking them out with his sword.

Back in Mindbender's lab, Snake-Eyes begins to resist the doctor's mind probes. In the Consulate's lobby, Scarlett's weapons are detected through her disguise. She's apprehended by the Baroness and Cobra security. When the Baroness opens the "vacuum" tank, she pounces on an angry Timber. Storm Shadow arrives in the building's boiler rooms, but spots several figures in the darkness. They're ninjas, all dressed in red. He battles the ninjas, then spills open an oil tank. He uses a throwing star to set off a spark and the whole room catches fire. Storm Shadow escapes into the nearby elevator.

Mindbender is still struggling to scan Snake-Eyes' mind when the commando enters a zen trance, blocking scans from his mind. The doctor can do nothing but watch as the scanner overloads, causing the monitors to explode in his face. Snake-Eyes makes a break for freedom, but is attacked by several Cobra soldiers. He is nearly beaten when Storm Shadow arrives in the elevator and fights his way through the Cobras. The two friends overcome the soldiers. Outside, Red Ninjas are scaling the building, and crash through the huge windows, attacking Storm Shadow and Snake-Eyes from both sides. Using their swords, the two warriors vault over the Red Ninjas. Before they can catch up, Storm Shadow plants explosives, and they escape into the elevator. Snake-Eyes hits the detonator and the top floor of the Consulate explodes, sending rubble everywhere. Mindbender crawls his way to an escape tunnel that leads to the ground floor. Snake-Eyes and Storm Shadow's elevator arrives at the lobby, where a squad of Cobra soldiers is lined up to stop them. They drop their weapons, as the Baroness appears behind them with a pistol pointing at each of their heads. She marches them out past the troops. Mindbender reaches the ground floor, and finds the Baroness and several Cobras tied up in a closet. Outside the building, "the Baroness" takes off her wig and glasses, revealing Scarlett! She, Snake-Eyes and Storm Shadow walk past the horde of firefighters outside to freedom.

Review: "Hush Job" is Larry Hama's second silent G.I. Joe story, the first being "Silent Interlude" from issue #21. Again, this is a Snake-Eyes/Storm Shadow/Scarlett story, which easily conveys a story with no dialogue or captions. Ron Wagner's great artwork makes this story all that more interesting. The story also introduces the Cobra Consulate building in Manhattan, which so far has been seen as only a model.

The story itself follows directly from issue #56, following Snake-Eyes' capture by Cobra. Of interest here, is the first appearance of the mysterious Red Ninjas, who would be expanded upon in later issues. Another group of red-clad ninjas appeared in "Silent Interlude", but Larry Hama has said they are not the same ninjas. Snake-Eyes' disrupting of the Brain-wave scanner is very reminiscent of issue #10, where the unfortunate doctor in charge is Dr. Venom, Mindbender's predecessor as Cobra's "mad scientist".

Reprinted in:

- Transformers (UK) #199 - 203 (Jan 7th - Feb 4th, 1989). A Marvel UK series featuring the UK's version of Transformers reprints this story in six parts, alongside an original story. This Transformers series began reprinting G.I. Joe stories after the cancellation of Action Force.

Joes on Television:

An uncredited article, this feature discusses the cartoon series, and its direction for the future. Like the article in the previous Yearbook, it details new characters and vehicles for the 1986 season, with more information than before. It goes on to discuss the process of producing an episode. What makes the article interesting is the brief mention of the 1987 "season", mentioning some elements that appear in G.I. Joe: The Movie. It seems that the plans for another season of the cartoon were adapted to become the movie that was the end of the Sunbow cartoon series.

Pin-Up Gallery:

The "pin-up" gallery includes artwork of various characters and is scattered throughout the book. The pencils for each pin-up are done by frequent cover artist Mike Zeck. The characters here are: Lady Jaye, Dr. Mindbender, Serpenter, Zandar & Zarana, the Dreadnoks and Hawk.

Cover Gallery:

This gallery features the covers of issues #45-56. The cover for #53 is shown without the Marvel Comics anniversary artwork that wrapped around the image.

And the Adventure Continues:

This segment is designed to help readers catch up to the storyline by seeing what important events they've missed. The feature is "narrated" and reprints important scenes from the series from issue #25 up to Wade Collins returning to Fred's family in issue #43. This section is actually a nice way to give new readers access to the comic book, but the order of events aren't exactly as they happened in the individual issues. Scenes are shown (in this order) from issues #25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 36, 34, 33, 42, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and #43.

My Dinner with Serpenter

Writer: Larry Hama

Pencils: Mike Zeck

Inks: Dennis Janke
Summary: "In the new Imperial dining suite on Cobra Island", Dr. Mindbender is outraged when the Dreadnoks (filling in for the sick "Kitchen-Vipers") serve he and Serpenter chocolate-covered donuts, grape sodas and pizza for dinner. "This is a gastronomic outrage!" he shouts. Serpenter stops Mindbender's ranting and tells him pizzas aren't inappropriate at all. He tells him of a memory he has from Julius Caesar. He explains that during the siege of Alesia during the Gallic campaigns, Caesar worried that his troops' morale was waning, due to the stale food they were forced to eat. He witnesses one of his soldiers taking pita bread and bits of meat and cheese, cooking them over a fire and making the food more palatable. He essentially invents pizza. After Caesar sees that all the troops learn of this, and they eat their "pizza", the Roman legions soon defeat the Gauls. Mindbender is again outraged, but now at Serpenter: "Are you telling me that the invention of the pizza led to the downfall of the Vercingetorix and to the domination of what is now France and Belgium?" Serpenter smiles, "No! Of course not... it was just a random memory." The final scene we see is the Gauls being led out of their fortress in chains, as Caesar looks on, eating a piece of pizza...

Review: This is an unusual and unexpected story, but turns out to be really funny. It's no secret that Larry Hama and some fans didn't enjoy being saddled with a "sci-fi" character like Serpenter, but this story shows that Hama tried to make the most of Serpenter, and had a little fun with him. The best parts of this story are Mindbender's outrage at everything, the Dreadnoks' continuing stupidity, and the mere tongue-in-cheek mention of the Kitchen-Vipers. The Caesar story itself is funny enough on its own.

Memo from Hawk:

The inside back cover features another "memo" from Hawk, briefly talking about the past year and mentioning the creation of Cobra Island and his new promotion, which actually occurs in issue #45, in the same month as this yearbook is published. There's little of significance here.

